AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Canceled)

2. (Canceled)

3. (Previously Presented) The sealing element according to claim 13, wherein among the plurality of fitting ribs, the fitting rib located closest to an entrance into the fit-holding portion is higher than those located within an interior section of the fit-holding portion.

4. (Previously Presented) The hermetic container according to claim 9, wherein among the plurality of fitting ribs, the fitting rib located closest to an entrance into the fit-holding portion is higher than those located within an interior section of the fit-holding portion.

5. (Previously Presented) The sealing element according to claim 13, wherein at least a length of the protruding part is set curved inwardly in a direction of squeezing and towards the opening face of the storage container so that the curved portion of the protruding part comes into contact with the contact surface of the container main body or the contact surface of the door element.

6. (Previously Presented) The hermetic container according to claim 9, wherein at least a length of the protruding part is set curved inwardly in a direction of squeezing and towards the opening face of the storage container so that the curved portion of the protruding part comes into contact with the contact surface of

the container main body or the contact surface of the door element.

7. (Canceled)

8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) A hermetic container comprising:

a sealing element which is interposed between an opening face and a door element of a storage container for precision substrates wherein the storage container comprises:

a container main body having the opening and supporting portions between which the precision substrates are put in alignment with each other;

wherein the door element closes the opening face and a retainer resiliently supports rims of the precision substrates;

a fit-holding portion which is formed by notching either a front inner periphery of the opening face of the container main body or an outer peripheral side of the door element, wherein the sealing element comprises:

an endless portion to be fitted into the fit-holding portion;

a flexible protruding part projected from the endless portion, obliquely and outwardly, and

a plurality of fitting ribs formed on at least one side of the endless portion so as to have a press-contact within the fit-holding portion and projected higher by 1 to 25% than the width of the fit-holding portion;

~~whereby, when an open front of the container main body is closed by the door element, the flexible protruding part of~~

~~the sealing element is flexed so that a curved portion of the protruding part comes into contact with a contact surface of the container main body or a contact surface of the door element, thus the protruding part of the sealing element is merely bent in the direction of attachment of the door element instead of being compressed in the direction of the attachment of the door element,~~

~~whereby, when the internal pressure of the container main body closed by the door element becomes higher than the external pressure, air is released from the interior of the container main body to the outside, while the internal pressure of the container main body closed by the door element becomes lower than the external pressure, the outside air is prevented from entering the container main body~~

wherein an angle of the protruding part, with respect to a line from the outer periphery of the endless portion to the open front of the container, is selected so that when a load is applied thereto in a direction toward the container main body, the sealing element flexes such that a curved portion of the protruding part contacts a contact surface of the container main body or a contact surface of the door element as a result of the protruding part being formed so that is only bends in the direction of attachment of the door element instead of being compressed in the direction of the attachment of the door element;

wherein the container main body, the door element and the protruding part are constructed and oriented with respect to one another so that when the internal pressure of the container main body closed by the door element becomes higher than the external pressure, air is released from the interior of the container

main body to the outside, while the internal pressure of the container main body closed by the door element becomes lower than the external pressure, the outside air is prevented from entering the main container body;

wherein the angle of the protruding part is selected so that when the load is applied, the protruding part is prevented from flexing in a reverse direction inward toward the endless portion.

10. (Original) The hermetic container according to claim 9, wherein the sealing element is formed using a fluororubber composition.

11. (Canceled)

12. (Previously Presented) The sealing element according to claim 13, wherein a vertical wall or projection having a vertical wall for positioning is formed on an opposite wall of the protruding part.

13. (Currently Amended) A sealing element which is interposed between an opening face and a door element of a storage container for precision substrates wherein the storage container comprises:

a container main body having an opening at the opening face and supporting portions between which the precision substrates are put in alignment with each other,

wherein the door element closes the opening and a retainer resiliently supports rims of the precision substrates;
a fit-holding portion which is formed by notching either a front inner periphery of the opening face of the container main body or an outer peripheral side of the door element;

wherein the sealing element comprises:

an endless portion to be fitted into the fit-holding portion;

a flexible protruding part projected from the endless portion, obliquely and outwardly, and

a plurality of fitting ribs formed on at least one side of the endless portion so as to have a press-contact within the fit-holding portion and projected higher by 1 to 25% than the width of the fit-holding portion,

~~whereby, when an open front of the container main body is closed by the door element, the flexible protruding part of the sealing element is flexed so that a curved portion of the protruding part comes into contact with a contact surface of the container main body or a contact surface of the door element, thus the protruding part of the sealing element is merely bent in the direction of attachment of the door element instead of being compressed in the direction of the attachment of the door element,~~

~~whereby when the internal pressure of the container main body closed by the door element becomes higher than the external pressure, air is released from the interior of the container main body to the outside, while the internal pressure of the container main body closed by the door element becomes lower than the external pressure, the outside air is prevented from entering the container main body.~~

wherein an angle of the protruding part, with respect to a line from the outer periphery of the endless portion to the open front of the container, is selected so that when a load is applied

thereto in a direction toward the container main body, the sealing element flexes such that a curved portion of the protruding part contacts a contact surface of the container main body or a contact surface of the door element as a result of the protruding part being formed so that is only bends in the direction of attachment of the door element instead of being compressed in the direction of the attachment of the door element;

wherein the container main body, the door element and the protruding part are constructed and oriented with respect to one another so that when the internal pressure of the container main body closed by the door element becomes higher than the external pressure, air is released from the interior of the container main body to the outside, while the internal pressure of the container main body closed by the door element becomes lower than the external pressure, the outside air is prevented from entering the main container body;

wherein the angle of the protruding part is selected so that when the load is applied, the protruding part is prevented from flexing in a reverse direction inward toward the endless portion.